

Kosmas Calls on Defense Secretary Gates to Address Delays in Providing Army Stop-Loss Payments

Sends Letter Asking for Update on Steps Being Taken to Expedite Payments

December 21, 2009

(Orlando, FL) – Today, Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24) sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates calling on the secretary to address delays in processing new Army stop-loss payments. The Retroactive Stop-Loss Special Pay was established in the 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Act for service members who had their enlistment extended or retirement suspended due to stop-loss between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2009. The Department of Defense has acknowledged problems in processing the claims and constituents have contacted Congresswoman Kosmas's office about the delays.

"I would like to know what steps the Department of Defense is taking to process claims in a timely fashion and to pay applicants in an expeditious manner," wrote Congresswoman Kosmas. "Congress and the nation recognize the sacrifices made by our brave troops and their families and this pay was intended to ease their burdens when they could not return home as originally planned. We owe our service members prompt payment of their Stop Loss Special Pay claims."

The Army had the largest number of personnel affected by stop-loss orders. Over 131,000 soldiers, including Guardsmen and Reservists, have been stop-lossed since 2001 for an average duration of 8 months each. Under the new policy, they will now be compensated an average of \$4,000.

All applications Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay must be submitted to the respective services no later than Oct. 21, 2010. Service members must provide documented proof they were stop-lossed with their claim. Family members of deceased service members should contact the appropriate military service for assistance in filing their claim.

For additional information, troops and their families can use the links below or contact Kosmas's office at 407-208-1106.

Army: <https://www.stoplosspay.army.mil>

Navy: send email to – NXAG_N132C@navy.mil

Marine Corps: <https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/stoploss>

Air Force: <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/stoploss>

Congresswoman Kosmas's letter to Secretary Gates can be found below:

Dear Secretary Gates:

I am concerned about reports that there is a large backlog of Stop Loss Special Pay claims being processed by the Department of the Army and the other military services in accordance with the 2009 Supplemental Appropriations Act. I understand the military service branches must process claims before payment can be made to applicants by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). I would like to know what steps the Department of Defense is taking to process claims in a timely fashion and to pay applicants in an expeditious manner.

In particular, the Army is experiencing a delay in processing claims due to software issues which has resulted in some claims being processed manually. It also appears the Army did not anticipate how many employees would be needed to process claims and forward them to DFAS. Since there is a one-year period in which eligible individuals can submit claims, it would seem that the Army and other military services, as appropriate, need to eliminate the backlog as soon as possible. DFAS must pay these claims as soon as possible.

Congress and the nation recognize the sacrifices made by our brave troops and their families and this pay was intended to ease their burdens when they could not return home as originally planned. We owe our service members prompt payment of their Stop Loss Special Pay claims. I look forward to hearing from you regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

SUZANNE M. KOSMAS

Member of Congress

###